

Midterm. Write a total of about 2000 words [about 7-8 pp typewritten, double spaced] on two of the following questions--one from group A and one from group B. You can write 1/4 on one and 3/4 on the other, or 1/2 on one and 1/2 on the other. One-half a letter grade may be deducted if your work is not neat and readable, so use a dark ribbon, clean your keys or whatever. Be sure to back up your generalizations with specific examples, details, etc.

Group A choose one

1. Discuss the aesthetics of the birth film using Brakhage's Water Window Baby Moving (from the first half of the course) and Thigh Line Lyre Triangular and Gunvor Nelson's Kirsa Nicholina. Be sure to include a discussion of the point or goal of making a birth film. Why document the event and make art of it? What makes one birth film aesthetically better than another?
2. Jane Brakhage is probably the best known woman represented in the New American Cinema because she appears in so many of Stan Brakhage's films (such as Hymn to Her) and he is such a well-known, frequently screened, and prolific filmmaker. Because Stan almost always makes silent films, Jane has never been given a literal "voice" within his work. nor has she been given a figurative "voice." We have some idea of how she felt about this in the attached interview from about 1972. Given this, what aesthetic and documentary challenge did Barbara Hammer face in making a portrait film of Jane Brakhage, and how well did she succeed?
3. Discuss issues of the personal and the private in terms of the difference in intended circulation of the work. For example, the Super 8mm "letter" from Fred Barney Taylor's filmmaking class was initially intended for one person, and Alice Worthen's home movies were intended to be seen within the family. But makers such as Brakhage, Hammer, Schneeman, and Montano take what is usually considered "private" in our culture and make work they intend to show widely (at least widely within the experimental sphere). Is there a difference? What aesthetic and ethical issues are involved?

Group B choose one

1. Compare and contrast Years of Hunger with one or more of the strictly autobiographical "documentary" works we've seen in the course, such as Hutton's diary or Schneeman's work about herself and her lovers. What is gained and what is lost by transforming autobiography into dramatic fiction?
2. Discuss Alan Ross's Grandfather Trilogy in terms of issues raised in the course.
3. Discuss, using at least four examples from the course, the question raised in JoAnn Elam's Lie Back and Enjoy It, "Can a man make a portrait of a woman that isn't sexist? Can a woman?"
4. Discuss cinematography or editing in two works seen in the course in terms of developing the expressive power of personal work.